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# Riley Child Verse

By

## James Whitcomb Riley

With Pictures by Ethel Franklin Betts

First Series

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By JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

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*To*

*The Children of The Old Times and of These—*

*With changeless love*

## THE RAGGEDY MAN

O THE RAGGEDY MAN! He works fer Pa;
An' he's the goodest man ever you saw!
He comes to our house every day,
An' waters the horses, an' feeds 'em hay;
An' he opens the shed—an' we all ist laugh
When he drives out our little old wobble-ly calf;
An' nen—ef our hired girl says he can—
He milks the cow fer 'Lizabuth Ann.—
Ain't he a' awful good Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

W'y, The Raggedy Man—he's ist so good
He splits the kindlin' an' chops the wood;
An' nen he spades in our garden, too,
An' does most things 'at *boys* can't do!—
He clumbed clean up in our big tree
An' shooked a' apple down fer me—
An' nother'n', too, fer 'Lizabuth Ann—
An' nother'n', too, fer The Raggedy Man.—
  Ain't he a' awful kind Raggedy Man?
    Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' The Raggedy Man, he knows most rhymes
An' tells 'em, ef I be good, sometimes:
Knows 'bout Giunts, an' Griffuns, an' Elves,
An' the Squidgicum-Squees 'at swallers therselves!
An', wite by the pump in our pasture-lot,
He showed me the hole 'at the Wunks is got,
'At lives 'way deep in the ground, an' can
Turn into me, er 'Lizabuth Ann,
Er Ma er Pa er The Raggedy Man!
  Ain't he a funny old Raggedy Man?
    Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man—one time when he
Wuz makin' a little bow-'n'-orry fer me,
Says "When *you're* big like your Pa is,
Air *you* go' to keep a fine store like his—
An' be a rich merchunt—an' wear fine clothes?—
Er what *air* you go' to be, goodness knows!"
An' nen he laughed at 'Lizabuth Ann,
An' I says "'M go' to be a Raggedy Man!—
I'm ist go' to be a nice Raggedy Man!"
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

## A SUDDEN SHOWER

BAREFOOTED boys scud up the street,
Or skurry under sheltering sheds;
And schoolgirl faces, pale and sweet,
Gleam from the shawls about their heads.

Doors bang; and mother-voices call
From alien homes; and rusty gates
Are slammed; and high above it all,
The thunder grim reverberates.

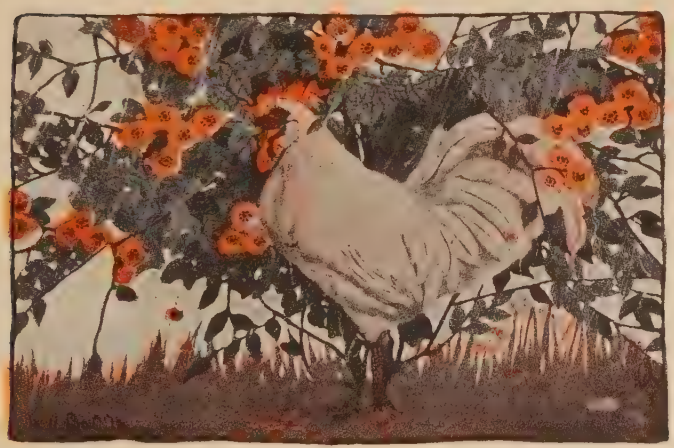
And then, abrupt,--the rain! the rain!—
The earth lies gasping; and the eyes
Behind the streaming window-pane
Smile at the trouble of the skies.

The highway smokes; sharp echoes ring;
  The cattle bawl and cowbells clank;
And into town comes galloping
  The farmer's horse, with steaming flank.

The swallow dips beneath the eaves,
  And flirts his plumes and folds his wings;
And under the catawba leaves
  The caterpillar curls and clings.

The bumble-bee is pelted down
  The wet stem of the hollyhock;
And sullenly, in spattered brown,
  The cricket leaps the garden walk.

Within, the baby claps his hands
  And crows with rapture strange and vague;
Without, beneath the rosebush stands
  A dripping rooster on one leg.



## CHRISTINE'S SONG

UP in Tentoleena Land—
Tentoleena! Tentoleena!
All the Dollies, hand in hand,
Mina, Nainie, and Serena,
Dance the Fairy fancy dances,
With glad songs and starry glances,
Lisping roundelays; and, after,
Bird-like interludes of laughter
Strewn and scattered o'er the lawn
Their gilt sandals twinkle on
Through light mists of silver sand—
Up in Tentoleena Land.

Up in Tentoleena Land—
Tentoleena! Tentoleena!
Blares the eerie Elfin band—
Trumpet, harp and concertina—
Larkspur bugle—honeysuckle
Cornet, with a quickstep chuckle
In its golden throat; and, maybe,
Lilies-of-the-valley they be
Baby-silver-bells that chime
Musically all the time,
Tossed about from hand to hand—
Up in Tentoleena Land.

Up in Tentoleena Land—
Tentoleena! Tentoleena!
Dollies dark, and blonde and bland—
Sweet as musk-rose or verbena—
Sweet as moon-blown daffodillies,
Or wave-jostled water-lilies,
Yearning to'rd the rose-mouths, ready
Leaning o'er the river's eddy,—
Dance, and glancing fling to you,
Through these lines you listen to,
Kisses blown from lip and hand
Out of Tentoleena Land!

## THE LISPER

ELSIE MINGUS *lisps,* she does!
She lives wite acrosst from us
In Miz. Ayers'uz house 'at she
Rents part to the Mingusuz.—
Yes, an' Elsie plays wiv me.

Elsie lisps so, she can't say
Her own name, ist *anyway!*—
She says *"Elthy"*—like they wuz
Feathers on her words, an' they
Ist stick on her tongue like fuzz.

*My!* she's *purty,* though!—An' when
She *lisps,* w'y, she's purty *nen!*
When she telled me, wunst, her doll
Wuz so "thweet," an' I p'ten'
*I* lisp, too,—she laugh'—'at 's all!—

*She* don't never git mad none—
'Cause she know I'm ist in fun.—
  Elsie she ain't one bit sp'iled.—
Of all childerns—ever' one—
  She's the *ladylikest* child!—

My Ma *say* she is! One time
Elsie start to say the rhyme,
  "Thing a thong o' thixpenth"—*Whee!*
I ist *yell!* An' Ma say I'm
  Unpolite as I can be!

Wunst I went wiv Ma to call
On Elsie's Ma, an' eat an' all;
  An' nen Elsie, when we've et,
An' we 're playin' in the hall,
  Elsie say: It's etikett

Fer young gentlemens, like me,
Eatin' when they's *company,*
  Not to never ever crowd
Down their food, ner "thip their tea
  Ner thup thoop so awful loud!"

## MAX AND JIM

MAX an' Jim,
They're each other's
Fat an' slim
Little brothers.

Max is thin,
An' Jim, the fac's is,
Fat ag'in
As little Max is!

Their Pa 'lowed
He don't know whuther
He's most proud
Of one er th'other!

Their Ma says
They're both so sweet—*'m!*—
That she guess
She'll haf to *eat* 'em!

## THE MAN IN THE MOON

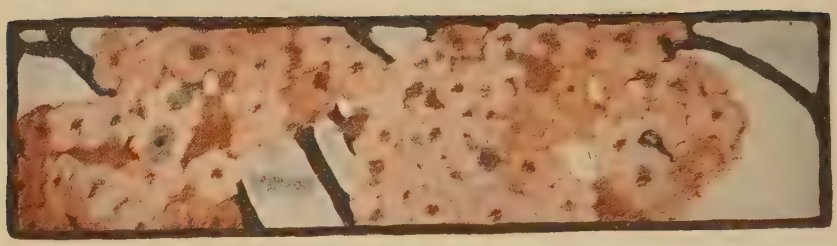
SAID The Raggedy Man, on a hot afternoon:
My!
Sakes!
What a lot o' mistakes
Some little folks makes on The Man in the Moon!
But people that's be'n up to *see* him, like *me,*
And calls on him frequent and intimuttly,
Might drop a few facts that would interest you
Clean!
Through!—
If you wanted 'em to—
Some *actual* facts that might interest you!

O The Man in the Moon has a crick in his back;
Whee!
Whimm!
Ain't you sorry for him?
And a mole on his nose that is purple and black;
And his eyes are so weak that they water and run
If he dares to *dream* even he looks at the sun,—
So he jes dreams of stars, as the doctors advise—
My!
Eyes!
But isn't he wise—
To jes dream of stars, as the doctors advise?

And The Man in the Moon has a boil on his ear—
Whee!
Whing!
What a singular thing!
I know! but these facts are authentic, my dear,—
There's a boil on his ear; and a corn on his chin—
He calls it a dimple—but dimples stick in—
Yet it might be a dimple turned over, you know!
Whang!
Ho!
Why, certainly so!—
It might be a dimple turned over, you know!

And The Man in the Moon has a rheumatic knee—
Gee!
Whizz!
What a pity that is!
And his toes have worked round where his heels
ought to be.—
So whenever he wants to go North he goes *South,*
And comes back with porridge-crumbs all round his
mouth,
And he brushes them off with a Japanese fan,
Whing!
Whann!
What a marvellous man!
What a very remarkably marvellous man!

'N' The Man in the Moon, sighed The Raggedy Man,
Gits!
So!
Sullonesome, you know,—
Up there by hisse'f sence creation began!—
That when *I* call on him and then come away,
He grabs me and holds me and begs me to stay,—
Till—*Well!* if it wasn't fer *Jimmy-cum-jim,*
Dadd!
Limb!
I'd go pardners with him—
Jes jump my job here and be pardners with *him!*



## THE FUNNIEST THING IN THE WORLD

THE funniest thing in the world, I know,
Is watchin' the monkeys 'at's in the show!—
Jumpin' an' runnin' an' racin' roun',
'Way up the top o' the pole; nen down!
First they're here, an' nen they're there,
An' ist a'most any an' ever'where!—
Screechin' an' scratchin' wherever they go,
They're the funniest thing in the world, I know!

They're the funniest thing in the world, I think:—
Funny to watch 'em eat an' drink;
Funny to watch 'em a-watchin' us,
An' actin' 'most like grown folks does!—
Funny to watch 'em p'tend to be
Skeerd at their tail 'at they happen to see;—
But the funniest thing in the world they do
Is never to laugh, like me an' you!

## SOME SCATTERING REMARKS OF BUB'S

WUNST I tooked our pepper-box lid
An' cut little pie-dough biscuits, I did,
An' cooked 'em on our stove one day
When our hired girl she said I may.

*Honey's* the *goodest* thing—Oo-*ooh!*
An' blackburry-pies is goodest, too!
But wite hot biscuits, ist soakin' wet
Wiv tree-mullasus, is goodest yet!

Miss Maimie she's my Ma's friend,—an'
She's purtiest girl in all the lan'!—
An' sweetest smile an' voice an' face—
An' eyes ist looks like p'serves tas'e!

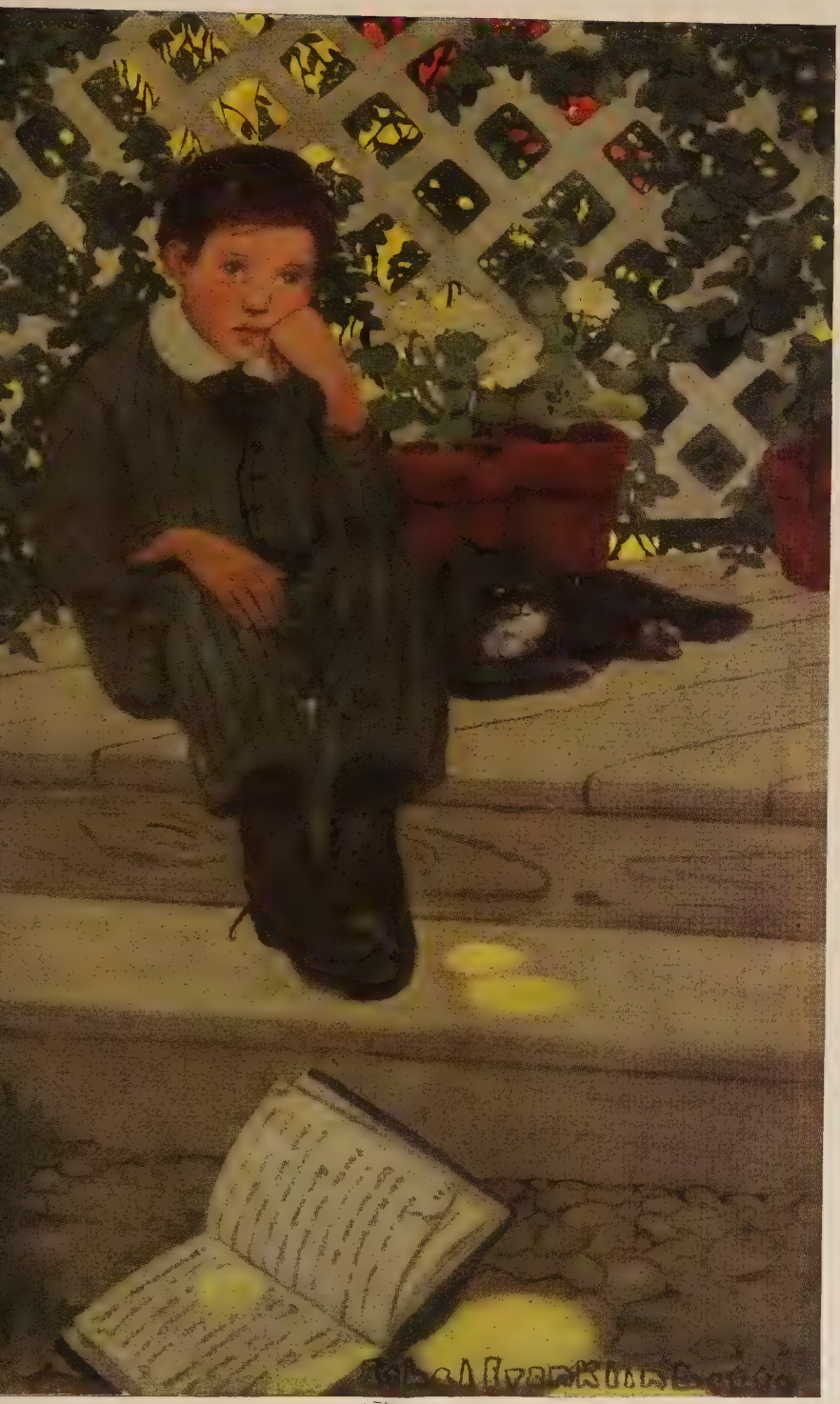
I *ruther* go to the Circus-show;
But, 'cause my *parunts* told me so,
I ruther go to the Sund'y School,
'Cause there I learn the goldun rule.

Say, Pa,—what *is* the goldun rule
'At's allus at the Sund'y School?

## ALMOST BEYOND ENDURANCE

I AIN'T a-goin' to cry no more no more!
I'm got ear-ache, an' Ma can't make
It quit a-tall;
An' Carlo bite my rubber-ball
An' puncture it; an' Sis she take
An' poke' my knife down through the stable-floor
An' loozed it—blame it all!
But I ain't goin' to cry no more no more!

An' Aunt Mame *wrote* she's comin', an' she *can't*—
Folks is come *there!*—An' I don't care
She *is* my Aunt!
An' my eyes stings; an' I'm
Ist coughin' all the time,
An' hurts me so, an' where my side's so sore
Grampa felt where, an' he
Says "Mayby it's *pleurasy!*"
But I ain't goin' to cry no more no more!



An' I clumbed up an' nen falled off the fence,
An' Herbert he ist laugh at me!
An' my fi'-cents
It sticked in my tin bank, an' I ist tore
Purt'-nigh my thumbnail off, a-tryin' to git
It out—nen *smash* it!—An' it's in there yit!
But I ain't goin' to cry no more no more!

*Oo!* I'm so wickud!—An' my breath's so *hot*—
Ist like I run an' don't res' none
But ist run on when I ought to not;
Yes, an' my chin
An' lips 's all warpy, an' teeth's so fast,
An' 's a place in my throat I can't swaller past—
An' they all hurt so!—
An' oh, my-oh!
I'm a-startin' ag'in—
I'm a-*startin'* ag'in, but I *won't,* fer shore!—
*I ist ain't goin' to cry no more no more!*

## HER LONESOMENESS

WHEN little Elizabeth whispers
Her morning-love to me,
Each word of the little lisper's,
As she clambers on my knee—
Hugs me and whispers, "Mommy,
Oh, I'm so glad it's day
And the night's all gone away!"
How it does thrill and awe me,—
"The night's all gone away!"

"Sometimes I wake, all listenin'," 
She sighs, "and all's so still!—
The moon and the stars half-glistenin'
Over the window-sill;—
And I look where the gas's pale light
Is all turned down in the hall—
And you ain't here at all!—
And oh, how I wish it was daylight!
—And you ain't here at all!

"And oh," she goes eerily whining
And laughing, too, as she speaks,
"If only the sun kept shining
For weeks and weeks and weeks!—
For the world's so dark, without you,
And the moon's turned down so low—
'Way in the night, you know,—
And I get so lonesome about you!—
'Way in the night, you know!"

## THE PIXY PEOPLE

IT was just a very
Merry fairy dream!—
All the woods were airy
With the gloom and gleam;
Crickets in the clover
Clattered clear and strong,
And the bees droned over
Their old honey-song.

In the mossy passes,
Saucy grasshoppers
Leapt about the grasses
And the thistle-burs;
And the whispered chuckle
Of the katydid
Shook the honeysuckle
Blossoms where he hid.

Through the breezy mazes
  Of the lazy June,
Drowsy with the hazes
  Of the dreamy noon,
Little Pixy people
  Winged above the walk,
Pouring from the steeple
  Of a mullein-stalk.

One—a gallant fellow—
  Evidently King,—
Wore a plume of yellow
  In a jewelled ring
On a pansy bonnet,
  Gold and white and blue,
With the dew still on it,
  And the fragrance, too.

One—a dainty lady—
  Evidently Queen,—
Wore a gown of shady
  Moonshine and green,
With a lace of gleaming
  Starlight that sent
All the dewdrops dreaming
  Everywhere she went.

One wore a waistcoat
  Of roseleaves, out and in,
And one wore a faced-coat
  Of tiger-lily-skin;
And one wore a neat coat
  Of palest galingale;
And one a tiny street-coat,
  And one a swallow-tail.

And Ho! sang the King of them
  And Hey! sang the Queen;
And round and round the ring of them
  Went dancing o'er the green;
And Hey! sang the Queen of them,
  And Ho! sang the King—
And all that I had seen of them
  —Wasn't anything!

It was just a very
  Merry fairy dream!—
All the woods were airy
  With the gloom and gleam;
Crickets in the clover
  Clattered clear and strong,
And the bees droned over
  Their old honey-song!

## AN IMPETUOUS RESOLVE

WHEN little Dickie Swope's a man,
He's go' to be a Sailor;
An' little Hamey Tincher, he's
A-go' to be a Tailor:
Bud Mitchell, he's a-go' to be
A stylish Carriage-Maker;
An' when *I* grow a grea'-big man,
I'm go' to be a Baker!

An' Dick'll buy his sailor-suit
O' Hame; an' Hame'll take it
An' buy as fine a double-rig
As ever Bud kin make it:
An' nen all three'll drive roun' fer me,
An' we'll drive off togevver,
A-slingin' pie-crust 'long the road
Ferever an' ferever!

## GRANNY

GRANNY'S come to our house,
And ho! my lawzy-daisy!
All the childern round the place
Is ist a-runnin' crazy!
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,
And fetched a pear fer all the pack
That runs to kiss their Granny!

Lucy Ellen's in her lap,
And Wade and Silas-Walker
Both's a-ridin' on her foot,
And Pollos on the rocker;
And Marthy's twins, from Aunt Marinn's,
And little Orphant Annie,
All's a-eatin' gingerbread
And giggle-un at Granny!

Tells us all the fairy tales
  Ever thought er wundered—
And 'bundance o' other stories—
  Bet she knows a hunderd!—
Bob's the one fer "Whittington,"
  And "Golden Locks" fer Fanny!
Hear 'em laugh and clap their hands,
  Listenun' at Granny!

"Jack the Giant-Killer" 's good;
  And "Bean-Stalk" 's another!—
So's the one of "Cinderell' "
  And her old godmother;—
That-un's best of all the rest—
  Bestest one of any,—
Where the mices scampers home,
  Like we runs to Granny!

Granny's come to our house,
  Ho! my lawzy-daisy!
All the childern round the place
  Is ist a-runnin' crazy!
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,
  And fetched a pie fer Nanny,
And fetched a pear fer all the pack
  That runs to kiss their Granny!